

RWJF and PCH *Speaking Together*

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Introduction

In June 2008, the Arizona Health Disparities Center (AHDC) had a chance to speak with Barbara Rayes (Coordinator of Translation Services & Language Education) and Irma Bustamante (Manager of Language Services) of Phoenix Children's Hospital (PCH, www.phoenixchildrens.com/), our local leaders in the area of Language Access Services (LAS) and quality improvement. Imbedded in the conversation was the discovery of so very much.

Our interview centered around the question: What is their role in LAS and building capacity with health care providers?

The work of PCH's Language and Cultural Services Department is and has been developed around a 3-prong approach: translation, interpretation and language education. Since they moved to a new location five years ago, their department has grown primarily based on need and because of the great support of their CEO and Executive Management Team. "The support of management is critical to the success of our work," Ms. Rayes and Ms. Bustamante said. "We model and mentor the *CLAS standards*; we learn and continuously improve."

Speaking Together

PCH was one of 10 chosen hospitals to be part of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) program, *Speaking Together*. Of the 10 hospitals nation wide, 2 were Children's Hospitals in Seattle and Phoenix. PCH was chosen for the RWJF program because of their existing work in the area of Language Access Services (LAS) and their readiness.

Speaking Together is a language access quality improvement project. It has quality improvement measures such as documentation in charts, wait time, safety, quality standards, timeliness, etc. Success in this improvement program has to have a multi-disciplinary approach that includes the IT department and others.

As a result of the work, in July 2008, a *Speaking Together Toolkit* was released. The toolkit has advise/tools for quality improvement on LAS. PCH's work for this project had a focus on communication for children with diabetes.

Medical Interpreter Project

In the years 2001 to 2008, PCH's Medical Interpreter Project has grown. It started locally and has grown nationally to more than 20 states across the U.S. Ms. Rayes shared that their "goal is to increase quality and quantity of LAS in healthcare," and their "primary tool is curriculum for those who are 1) doing their job in two languages and 2)

interpretation.” Currently, the Medical Interpreter Project has a curriculum to “train the trainers” and Spanish Bilingual Assistants.

Ms. Rayes indicated that one of their strategies for building capacity and sustainability has been building their learning community for the “train the trainer” curriculum. “In our learning community, we accept an organization into the training. The participation of the organization includes the CEO, supervisor and trainer,” she said. “So when staff turn over, the focus and skills do leave with the person.”

LAS Collaborations

In addition to RWJF, they also collaborate with JACHO, *Hablamos* and others. They have embarked on a training and mentoring program for interpreters who speak a language other than English or Spanish. The program is part of a board for the International Rescue Committee in Arizona, which works with many populations in need, such as recent refugees from Iraq and Somalia.

Comments

Imbedded in the wonderful conversation with PCH were great suggestions and reminders to us all. The following are tips for our readers:

- Gain management support for LAS efforts
- Position the organization to be ready for obtaining funding opportunities
- Organizational readiness is the key in securing funding opportunities
- Create a learning community
- Work with Boards and other leadership organizations
- And finally, collaborate, collaborate, collaborate for leveraging opportunities.

What can you do?

If you have a success story and/or comments on toolkits or assessments, please let Jana Granillo know at granilj@azdhs.gov or 602-542-1219.